

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:

Connecticut

COUNTY:

Hartford

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS

## INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

## 1. NAME

COMMON:

Mark Twain House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Mark Twain House

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

351 Farmington Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Hartford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

First

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY:

Hartford

CODE

003

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Mark Twain Memorial

STREET AND NUMBER:

351 Farmington Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Hartford

STATE:

Connecticut

CODE

09

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Hartford City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:

550 Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:

1967

☒ Federal☐ State☐ County☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:

Library of Congress

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

District of Columbia

CODE

11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
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Hartford

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## 7 DESCRIPTION

(Check One)

CONDITION

☒ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

(Check One)

☐ Altered☒ Unaltered☐ Moved☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"The house was permanent polychrome and gingerbread Gothic; it was part steamboat, part medieval stronghold, and part cuckoo clock... It was the conspicuous symbol of his success as a writer, lecturer, and dramatist..." (Justin Kaplan in Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain) Clemens wanted a radical departure from the typical box-like Hartford houses of the period, and Edward Tuckerman Potter, an architect active in the Hartford area, designed for him this asymmetrical polychromatic brick structure, with sweeping wood cornices and gables and flamboyant patterns of black and vermilion brick.

Potter designed the house, but Mark Twain oversaw the construction and added and changed many features. He added a patch of tin to the roof so that he could hear the rain drumming, and a window over the dining-room fireplace so that he could watch the flames meeting the snowflakes. Around his house he built rambling, deck-like porches, and in the front hallway a compact, river-boat style staircase.

In the midst of the construction, 38 year old Samuel Clemens wrote to Mrs. Langdon, his mother-in-law:

I have been bullyragged all day by the builder, by his foreman, by the architect, by the tapestry devil who is to upholster the furniture, by the idiot who is putting down the carpets, by the scoundrel who is setting up the billiard-table (and has left the balls in New York), by the wildcat who is sodding the ground and finishing the driveway (after the sun went down), by a book agent, whose body is in the back yard and the coroner notified. Just think of this thing going on the whole day long, and I am a man who loathes details with all my heart." (Albert Bigelow Paine in Mark Twain, a Biography, Vol. I, p. 520).

A contemporary description of the Mark Twain house, during its construction, comes from an account in The Hartford Daily Times of March 23, 1874, which called it, "one of the oddest looking buildings in the State ever designed for a dwelling, if not in the whole country." They gave the following report of it: "It is located on a lot of ground some 612 feet by about 400, just west of Forest Street, being on the south side of Farmington Avenue. It is of brick and three stories in height, fronting easterly. The extreme length of the building is 105 feet 4 inches; its extreme width 62 feet 4 inches. On the west side there is an octagonal tower 48 or 50 feet in height; while at the extreme ends, north and south, of the house, there are towers of less height. The designs for the building were furnished by Edward T. Potter and Alfred H. Thorp, Architects, of New York. On the first floor there is to be a parlor, drawing-room or library, dining room and bedrooms. The drawing-room, on the rear of the south end of the building, is to open into a semicircular conservatory. On the second floor

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian      ☐ 16th Century      ☐ 18th Century      ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century      ☐ 17th Century      ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1874-1903

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education             | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering           | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture          | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military              |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                 |  |  |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From 1874 when it was completed, until financial disaster forced him to move his family to Europe in 1891, this was Mark Twain's home, and it remained his property until 1903. Because of the well-known characters Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Clemens is most readily identified with Hannibal and the Midwest. Ironically, however, he did not write in Missouri. It was during the 17 years he lived in this house he commissioned at 351 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut, that numerous books, sketches and articles were written including The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Prince and the Pauper, Life on the Mississippi, A Tramp Abroad and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.

Samuel Clemens first came to Hartford in 1868 to discuss the publishing of Innocents Abroad with Elisha Bliss, president of the American Publishing Company. Clemens liked Hartford from the time of that visit and shortly afterward wrote, "Of all the beautiful towns it has been my fortune to see this is the chief," (Alta California, September 6, 1868). In 1870 he married Olivia Langdon of Elmira, N.Y., and in 1871 he left his job on the Buffalo, N.Y. Express and moved to Hartford, attracted by its location, industry and list of literary and social personalities.

Because his publisher, Bliss, and many literary friends lived there, the Clemenses decided in 1873 to make Hartford their permanent residence. With the proceeds from the publication of Innocents Abroad they bought land and commissioned Edward Tuckerman Potter to design their house. The Clemens chose for their home the Nook Farm area, a small, closely-knit, influential community where the neighbors, among them Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Dudley Warner, and their many guests met for dinner parties and teas, charades and weekly stag billiard sessions. The elderly Mrs. Stowe often wandered into the Clemenses' home to play their piano. She designed their conservatory with its dripping fountain, similar to ones she designed for other Nook Farm houses.

The house was completed in September 1874 and Mr. and Mrs. Clemens and daughters Susy, born in 1872, and Clara, born in 1874, moved in. The third daughter, Jean was born in 1880. The house represents Samuel L. Clemens, successful author and family man. This house saw his rise to the peak of his creative powers and his tragic financial failure. In addition to the Clemens family, seven servants, numerous cats and as

# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Clemens, Clara, My Father, Mark Twain (New York 1931).  
 Faude, Wilson H., "Mark Twain's Connecticut Home" Historic Preservation  
 April-June 1974, Vol. 26 #2, pp. 16-20.  
 Kaplan, Justin, Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain (New York 1970).  
Mark Twain in Hartford, booklet published by the Mark Twain Library and  
 Memorial Association (Hartford 1958).  
 Paine, Albert Bigelow, Mark Twain, a Biography, 3 vols. (New York 1912)

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	UTM 18.691020.4626260		
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1-1/2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project: J. Walter Coleman, 1962

ORGANIZATION Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, DATE  
 Historic Sites Survey, NPS Nov. 6, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: STATE CODE  
 Washington D.C.

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

((NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS))

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

((NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS))

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Landmark  
 Designated: Dec 29, 1962  
 date

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Boundary Affirmed: 7-17-75

Date Chief Hist. & date

ATTEST: Arch. Surveys

Boundary Affirmed:

7/24/75

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Mark Twain House

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(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
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there will be a study, nursery, sewing-room and boudoir, house-keeper's room, servants' bedroom and numerous bath-rooms. On the third floor there will be a billiard-room, artists' friends' room, toilet and two servants' rooms. The dining-room, at the rear, on the north end of the house, has one feature we do not recollect to have seen in any other building, and that is a window directly above the fire-place. From it a pleasant view of the avenue is to be obtained. There are no less than five balconies about this building, beside that of the west tower. A verandah will run around the south end and the east front of the ground floor of the building, with an extensive covered projection of porte cochère (drive-way for carriages) on the east. The rooms will all be finished in black walnut and oak, except the nursery and bathrooms, in which butternut will be used. The main hall-way of the building, open from the first floor to the third, is 15 by 25 feet;...

"The novelty displayed in the architecture of the building, the oddity of its internal arrangement, and the fame of its owner, will all conspire to make it a house of note for a long time to come."

In 1881 the Clemenses remodeled and enlarged the house, adding a servants' wing on the northwest side. At this time they enlisted Louis Comfort Tiffany and Associated Artists (Samuel Coleman, Lockwood deForest and Candace Wheeler) to redecorate the principal rooms on the first floor. Tiffany and his partners had developed a daring style using pale tints and borrowing freely from American, Oriental, Turkish and Indian styles. Many of the Associated Artists' designs were adapted from native American flowers and plants and they introduced American glass, woods, textiles and metals in their work. Of all the important commissions this firm received, including the partial redecoration of the White House in 1882, its only surviving house open to the public is Mark Twain's Hartford home.

From 1903 to 1922 a family owned the house, leasing it to a boys' school from 1917 to 1922. After that it became a warehouse and finally was divided into apartments. Slated for demolition, the building was saved in 1929 by the Friends of Hartford, who raised the \$150,000 to purchase it. The apartments were left, the Hartford Public Library maintained a branch on the ground floor and the guest suite became a museum-memorial room. Not until 1955 did the Mark Twain Memorial have the funds to begin restoration of the house and open it to the public as a museum.

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The board set high standards for the restoration, requiring documented evidence of the way things were before any restoration work began. All manuscripts, letters, contemporary articles, documents, all the stereopticon views in the Library of Congress, all historical references to the house, a room or an object in the house were carefully checked. Interviews with contemporaries of the Clemenses were arranged and recorded. Painstaking removal of paint, layer by layer, revealed the original wall colors and designs, sometimes beneath six or seven layers of paint. The uncovered areas were sealed and the walls then were covered with a fine canvas on which the original decoration was reproduced. Careful removal and checking of wood moldings and trim revealed original finished, wallpapers and even the placement and type of hardware used. Floors were scraped to locate original tackholes, which by their placement indicate the type and width of the original carpeting. Much of the hand stencilling and painting during the restoration was done by two brothers, Bernard and Leopold Sans local craftsmen trained in Germany.

The carriage house to the rear of the mansion has been somewhat altered and presently houses the Junior League offices and two rented apartments. The Memorial plans eventually to restore this building and use it as an orientation center, restoration laboratory and a gallery for the photographs, documents, Clemens memorabilia and Tiffany and deForest works that the Memorial has collected, some of which they display in the basement of the main house.

Boundary Description

The Mark Twain Memorial property contains the brick mansion and carriage house. The Clemens' greenhouse was torn down years ago. These are one of a group of three houses and one of two carriages houses remaining of the Nook Farm neighborhood. The other two extant houses are the home of Harriet Beecher Stowe at 77 Forest Street and a large Victorian mansion at the southwesterly corner of Farmington Avenue and Forest Street now housing the Nook Farm Research Library. Both the Library and the Stowe House are the property of the Stowe-Day Memorial Library and Historical Foundation. A carriage house at the rear of the Stowe House has become the Nook Farm Visitor's Center, serving both the Mark Twain House and the Stowe House. Presently no boundary divisions are easily perceptible between the properties of the Mark Twain Memorial and the Stowe-Day Foundation. South of these properties, covering the rest of the area that used to be the Nook Farm community is a large complex of modern school buildings, the new Hartford Public High School.

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The national historic landmark is the Mark Twain Memorial which includes the three-story mansion, the two-story carriage house and the well-screened parking lot to the west of the house, on one and one-half acres. Beginning at the northwestern corner, the property is bounded on the north by the southern curb of Farmington Avenue for 250 feet, on the east by the land and buildings of the Stowe-Day Memorial Library and Historical Foundation, along a line due south 227.85 feet, on the south by the Hartford Public High School for 183 feet, then 116 1/2 feet in a northwesterly curve, then 82.40 feet on the west to the point of beginning on Farmington Avenue.

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many as three colliers roamed the house. Guests were frequent, dinner parties continual. Edwin Booth, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Thomas Nast, William Dean Howells, Sir Henry Morton Stanley, Gen. William T. Sherman, Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, Rudyard Kipling, Bret Harte and anyone on the way from Boston to New York City and elsewhere visited and dined there. The cost of this expensive house (\$70,000 for the house, with \$21,000 worth of furniture, on a \$31,000 tract of land) plus the Clemenses' flamboyant style of living and entertaining, soon nearly equaled his income.

The Hartford period was not without disappointment and tragedy. The Clemenses' only son, Langdon, died of diphtheria in 1872 at age two. Mark Twain's heavy investment in various inventions, principally the Paige typesetter, and the mismanagement of his own publishing firm placed severe strains on the budget. In 1891 he was forced to close the Hartford house and embark on a lecture tour to pay his debts. Clemens' inability to cope with finances coupled with the panic of 1893 wiped out his investments and the lectures had to be extended on a world-tour basis.

By 1896 the bills were paid and Susy and Jean prepared to join their parents and Clara in England. In the fall they planned to return to Hartford. On the day that Susy and Jean were to sail for England, Susy became ill, and within a few days she died of spinal meningitis. Of her death Clemens wrote, "She died at home. She had that privilege," Mrs. Clemens would not reenter the house and the family never returned to Hartford to live. In 1903 they sold the house and auctioned off the furnishings. Subsequently they lived in Elmira, Riverdale and New York, N.Y., and Florence, Italy. In 1908 Clemens built his house, Stormfield, in Redding, Connecticut, where he died two years later.

September 1974 marked the 100th anniversary of the Hartford house, which has been restored most authentically. The house, its decorations and its history represent a truly unique blend of owner, architect and interior decorator. As Samuel Clemens wrote in a letter, "To us, our house was not unsentient matter--it had a heart, and a soul....It was of us, and we were in its confidence, and lived in its grace and in the peace of its benediction. We never came home from an absence that its face did not light up and speak out its eloquent welcome--and we could not enter it unmoved."

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This is the House that Mark built.

These are the bricks of various hue  
And shape and position, straight and askew,  
With the nooks and angles and gables too,  
Which make up the house presented to view,  
The curious house that Mark built.

This is the sunny and snug retreat,  
At once both city and country seat,  
Where he grinds out many a comical grist,  
The author, architect, humorist,  
The auctioneer and dramatist,  
Who lives in the house that Mark built...

Samuel L. Clemens his maiden name;  
As a humorist not unknown to fame,  
As author or architect all the same,  
At auction or drama always game,  
An extravagant wag whom none can tame:  
He lives in the house that Mark built.

Here is the Innocent Abroad,  
The patron too of the lightning rod;  
And here disports the Jumping Frog,  
Roughing it on his native log;  
Tom Sawyer, with his graceless tricks,  
Amuses the horse-car lunatics;  
And here is the grim historic sage,  
Who hurled in the facts of the Gilded Age,  
In this curious house that Mark built.

And below is the alias autograph  
Over which he has given you many a laugh,  
This author, architect, humorist,  
This auctioneer and dramatist,  
Who still keeps grinding his comical grist  
In his cozy, sunny and snug retreat,  
At once both city and country seat,  
Made up of bricks of various hue  
And shape and position, straight and askew,  
With its nooks and angles and gables too,  
The curious house that Mark built.

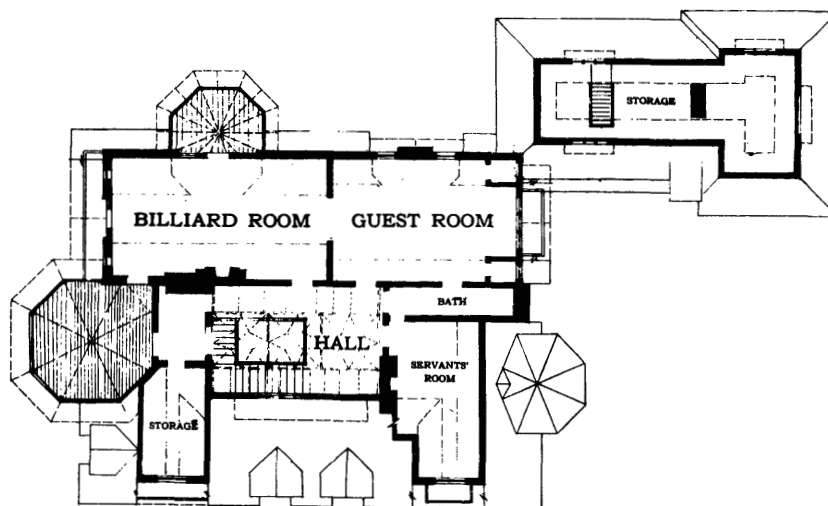
Mark Twain

# MARK TWAIN'S HOUSE

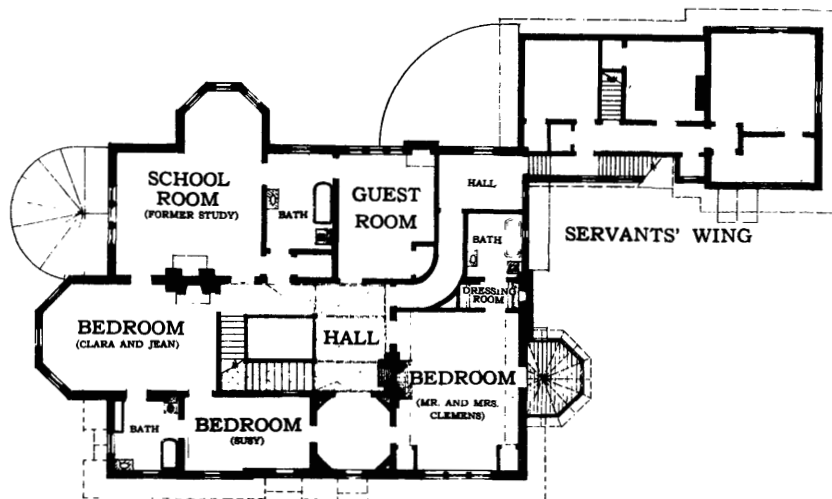
BUILT 1874

EDWARD TUCKERMAN POTTER, ARCHITECT

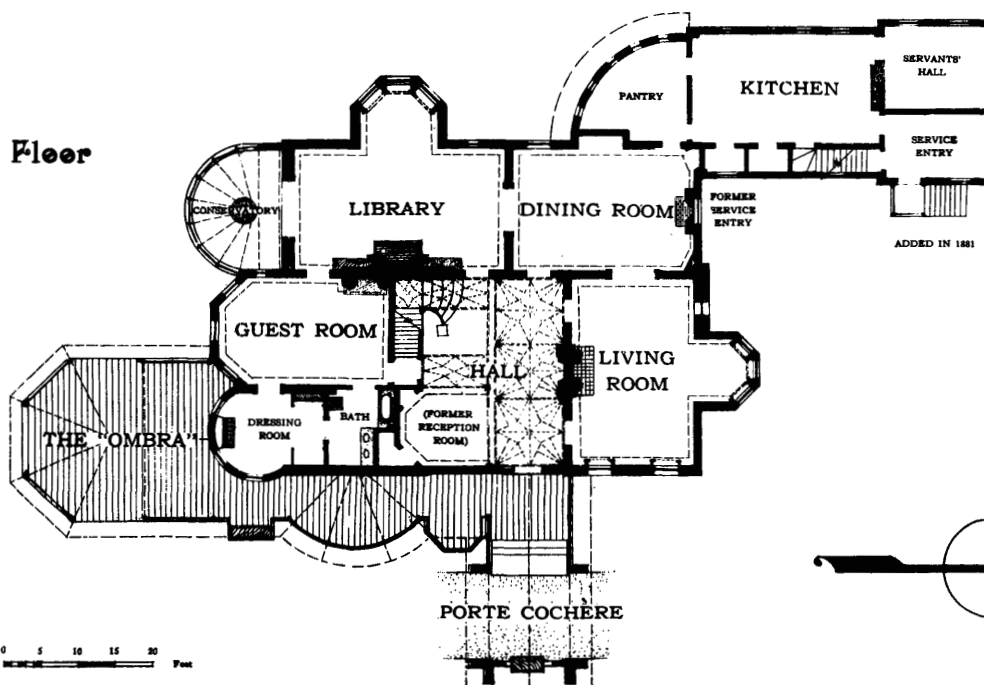
Third Floor



Second Floor



First Floor



SCALE 0 5 10 15 20 Feet

